

STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

410 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06134-0308

MILITARY DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

360 BROAD STREET
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105-3780

December 20, 2004

To: Chief Elected Official (**merged addresses from data base**)
Street Address
Town, CT zip code

Re: Nerve Agent Antidote Kit Training and Implementation Program

The purpose of this letter is two-fold. The first is to inform you about a training program that has been developed and is being distributed as part of the Connecticut Statewide Domestic Preparedness Strategy to better protect our first responders. The second is to seek your support and commitment to have all of your first responders and administrators participate in the training program.

One of the domestic preparedness issues being addressed is assisting Chief Elected Officials with the protection of responders who are first on the scene of a chemical or biological incident. Through the use of federal grants, personal protective equipment has been purchased for most if not all of your first responders. In addition to providing personal protective and communications equipment, the Connecticut Statewide Domestic Preparedness Strategy includes providing first responders with pharmaceuticals to counter life threatening reactions if exposed to chemical or biological agents. One of the key pharmaceuticals is a nerve agent antidote which is contained in an auto-injector commonly called a Mark 1 Kit. A complete nerve agent antidote "kit" also includes Diazepam (Valium) in a separate auto-injector. Due to the content and delivery system of the nerve agent antidote kit, a first responder must be trained on the use, safety and security of the kit prior to it being issued for use.

PA03-6 passed during last year's legislative session allows first responders to carry and use nerve agent antidote kits once they have completed an approved training course. In order to comply with PA03-6, a workgroup of subject matter experts was created to design a statewide nerve agent antidote kit training program. The working group included representatives from the Connecticut Fire Academy, the Capitol Region Metropolitan Medical Response System, the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Office of Emergency Management, the Office of Policy and Management, the Connecticut Department of Public Safety Division of Homeland Security, the Connecticut State Police and the two DPH designated Hospital Centers of Excellence (the Hartford Hospital Healthcare System and the Yale-New Haven Healthcare System).

The Capitol Region Metropolitan Response System (CR-MMRS) had already developed and implemented a protocol and training program for the administration of nerve agent antidote kits for the Capitol Region Emergency Disaster Response Plan participants. The workgroup reviewed, amended and approved the CR-MMRS protocol and training package for "statewide implementation". The statewide training program developed has been approved by the Office of Emergency Management.

The Connecticut Fire Academy (CFA), the Connecticut State Police (CSP) and the two Hospital Centers of Excellence have agreed to apply their collective resources to provide nerve agent antidote kit training to all current and future first responders. The two Hospital Centers of Excellence have each received federal grants from the Health Resource Services Administration (HRSA) via the Connecticut Department of Public Health to provide training to pre-hospital responders. The CFA and the CSP each have training facilities. The initial training on the kits will be presented in the "train the trainer" format at no cost to designated members of the fire, police and emergency medical service communities. The combined initial training and subsequent training to meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) competencies related to blood borne pathogens will assure Connecticut will have a robust nerve agent antidote training program for our first responders. However, providing the training is only part of the program.

The distribution of nerve agent antidote kits to a first responder organization cannot take place unless all of the first responders within a functional response agency have been trained and demonstrate proficiency on its proper use. The protocols being adopted statewide require 100% participation by the personnel of each individual agency or, within an agency a tactical team. For example, Hartford Police Department Bomb Squad is trained and equipped, but not the remainder of the agency (the police department). As mentioned, the Diazepam component of the nerve agent antidote kit provides some unique challenges. In some areas of the State, the Diazepam component of the kit will only be issued to emergency medical service providers. Regardless, it will be up to each first responder agency/unit to incorporate the proper security and accountability measures for any and all components (the Diazepam and the Mark 1 Kits) of the nerve agent antidote kit issued. Enclosure (1) provides additional information about security issues.

Proper training of personnel and security for the nerve agent antidote kits are mechanical functions that can be resolved through common practice and procedures. However, in order for the program to be truly effective, the local Chief Elected Official needs to be involved. Your commitment to have your first responders participate and adhere to the protocols of the program is essential. We are asking all Chief Elected Officials to ensure that your fire, police and emergency medical service chiefs are on board with the nerve agent antidote kit program. We are also asking that each of you establish a system that will allow you to verify that the training has been completed and documented for a particular response unit. The best approach is for each municipality to designate a point of contact for the nerve agent antidote kit training program. Enclosure (3) is a simple means for you to make a commitment to the program as well as a means to designate your point of contact.

We owe it to our first responders to provide them with all of the equipment and training possible to better prepare them for what we hope never happens. Should you have any questions regarding the nerve agent antidote kit training program, please feel free to contact one of the following people:

Len Guercia
Department of Public Health
Director, Office of Emergency Medical Services
(860) 509-7968
leonard.guercia@po.state.ct.us

Chuck Beck
Office of Emergency Management
Chief, Domestic Preparedness Planning Division
(860) 493-2728
charles.beck@po.state.ct.us

Thank you in advance for your support and participation of this very important program.

Sincerely,

J. Robert Galvin MD, MPH
Commissioner
Department of Public Health

Kerry L. Flaherty
Director
Office of Emergency Management

Encl: (1) Security Issues
(2) PA03-6
(3) Acknowledgement Form

Enclosure (1)

Diazepam Security Issues

Diazepam is a Class II controlled substance. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has established rules and regulations for the handling and security of class II drugs. The Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection is the state equivalent to the federal DEA. The distribution and use of a nerve agent antidote kit that contains Diazepam must meet security standards.

- **Responsibilities of municipalities**
 - Each municipality's departments/agencies receiving nerve agent antidote kits first shall prepare a detailed plan for the storage, security, inventory, and distribution of the nerve agent antidote kits to individual responders. The plan shall address at least the following considerations:
 1. Storage in a facility shall occur in a locked and monitored location.
 2. Storage on vehicles shall occur in a locked storage box, and components shall be inventoried and logged following each shift change.
 3. Logs and other records shall be maintained by the department/agency provided the Kits and as well as the municipality point of contact.
 - Individual departments/agencies shall provide authorized training to each and every first responder. Upon completion of the training program, first responders shall receive certification that they are authorized to utilize and dispense the pharmaceuticals.
 - The department/agency shall submit a Roster of Vouchers that shall be presented by the department/agency designated point of contact (medical officer) to the servicing hospital pharmacy. The pharmacy then shall release and distribute the appropriate quantity of pharmaceuticals to the department/agency medical officer.
 - Upon receipt of the pharmaceuticals, the department/agency medical officer shall be solely responsible for the storage and security of the drugs, and for the distribution of the drugs to the certified first responders.
 - The municipal designated point of contact shall audit the security and distribution system established for the department/agencies within the municipality.

Enclosure (2)



House Bill No. 6806

June 30 Special Session, Public Act No. 03-6

***AN ACT CONCERNING GENERAL BUDGET AND REVENUE
IMPLEMENTATION PROVISIONS.***

Sec. 168. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Any paid or volunteer firefighter, police officer or emergency medical service personnel who successfully completes a training course in the use of automatic pre-filled cartridge injectors may carry and use such injectors containing nerve agent antidote medications in the event of a nerve agent exposure for self-preservation or unit preservation. Such training course shall be approved by the director of the Office of Emergency Management and provided by the Connecticut Fire Academy, the Capitol Region Metropolitan Medical Response System or the federal government.

Enclosure (3)

Acknowledgement Form

The town/city/village of _____ wants to participate in the nerve agent antidote kit distribution program being established by the State of Connecticut. As the Chief Elected Official, I agree to abide by the protocols set in the training and distribution program. My point of contact is _____ who can be reached at (telephone number), (fax),(e-mail), (mailing address).

Signature of Chief Elected Official _____

Date _____

The town/city/village of _____ does not want to participate in the nerve agent kit distribution program being established by the State of Connecticut at this time. I am aware of the potential risk to my first responders by not participating.

Signature of Chief Elected Official _____

Date _____

Please complete the appropriate part of the form and return to:

Mr. Leonard Guercia
Department of Public Health
Office of Emergency Medical Services
410 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105